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THE TRINITY.

Second lecture on i John, v. 7, delivered in Rochester, March 28th, 1824, by the Editor.

IN my last discourse, I reviewed the historical evidence for this indescribable doctrine ; and it now remains to consider the arguments which its advocates adduce from the scriptures. But first permit me to inquire, if revelation can teach a doctrine so unintelligible, mysterious, and incomprehensible as that of the Trinity. No, I am bold to say with Dr. Priestly, councils may decree it, rulers may enact laws to maintain, but no revelation can ever teach such a tissue of absurdity. Could the God of infinite wisdom endue the mind of man with intellectual faculties, and then demand a blind submission to contradictory incomprehensibilities, which require such a prostration of the understanding as reduces man to the passive acquiescence of the lower animals, even in matters which are of the most importance to his happiness. Surely we have much more reason to believe, that such an embargo would be laid on the mind, by some tyrannical fellow creature ; who wished by our degradation to exalt his own authority and influence. What less than a blind confidence in spiritual guides, could ever have induced men to renounce or despise that reason, which alone makes them wiser than the fowls of Heaven ?

It has long been pretended, that reason should bow implicitly to revelation : but is it not highly absurd to pretend to believe that, of which we have no conceptions. God never gave a revelation to the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, or the fish of the sea ! Why then has he distinguished man, if it be not on account of his rational faculties ? Moreover how could man ascertain the truth of any revelation or distinguish it, from any imposture, but by the use of that reason, which he knows more certainly to have come from God, than any other communication whatever. To speak so as not to be understood, indicates folly, or evil design ; and to pretend mystery, is an invention to cast a thick veil over absurdities, contradictions, and imposture. "Revelation, says Mr. Locke, is nothing but natural religion confirmed by the God of nature : therefore no proposition can be received for Divine revelation, if it be contradictory to our clear and intuitive knowledge. He that takes away *reason* to make way for *revelation*, puts out the light of both : and does much the same as if he persuaded a man to put out his eyes, the better to

receive the remote light of an invisible star by the aid of a telescope." "That doctrine, says Dr. A. Clark, which cannot stand the test of rational investigation, cannot be true. We have gone too far when we have said, such and such doctrines should not be subjected to rational investigation, being doctrines of pure revelation. I know of no such doctrines in the bible. The doctrines of this book, are doctrines of eternal reason; and they are revealed because they are such." Now, to use the words of an eminent Trinitarian, "what rational evidence is there of the Trinity? The doctrine of the Trinity I have no hesitation in saying, not only transcends, but contradicts human reason." Brethren, I have laid a resolute hand on this irrational, mis-shapen monster, and am determined not to let him escape till he has passed that ordeal to which he ought most righteously to be exposed. I know the Trinitarian deprecates the use of reason, but the Unitarian vindicates its exercise. The one stigmatizes it as carnal, the other considers it the most refined and spiritual part of man, the virtuous employment of which is productive of pleasure. The Trinitarian persuades us that reason is a dark and treacherous guide; the Unitarian, that it is the lamp of the Almighty. Hence the impression of every unprejudiced mind must be, that Trinitarianism and reason are at war with each other; & if the one be embraced, the other must be renounced!

The doctrine of the Trinity took its rise during the reign of servile and ambitious Priests. It fared sumptuously during that long dark period, in which superstition and her legitimate offspring, ignorance, vice, and slavery were predominant sovereigns; reason, virtue and conscience being bound in fetters, and free inquiry proscribed under penalty of being confined in loathsome dungeons, or consumed by the blazing faggots! Of all the absurd dogmas ever propagated in the nominally christian world, none seem so much calculated to bewilder the understanding and excite disgust, as that of the Trinity. Well may it shroud itself in mystery, and shrink from the touch of reason. Free inquiry has burst her chains, the voice of reason demands to be heard; and the human mind no longer satisfied with incomprehensibilities, rises indignant at the shackles of priestcraft and tyranny. Alas, alas! Mystery, Babylon for in one hour is thy judgment come!

Auditors turn not away from Christianity through disgust at its abuses, or despair of finding the truth as it is in Jesus. I speak against Pagan and Jewish corruptions, but my soul loves the religion of Jesus as God's most glorious display of benevolence to man, in his present mode of being. "Though says Jortin in his remarks on Ecclesiastical History, so much of christianity ever subsisted as to distinguish it advantageously from Paganism, Judaism, Mahometanism, or Deism; it varied considerably, and adopted several disagreeing non-essentials, according to the times and the people by

whom it was entertained. Thus a clear and unpolluted fountain, whose sacred channels are fed by the dew of Heaven, where it grows a large river, and takes a long and winding course, receives a tincture from the various soils through which it passes; so when christianity became a bulky system, one may easily trace in it the genius of the loquacious and ever-wrangling Greeks; of the enthusiastic Africans, whose imagination was sublimed by the heat of the sun; of the superstitious Egyptians whose fertile soil and warm climate produced monks and hermits, swarming like animals sprung from the impregnated mud of the Nile; and of the ambitious and political Romans, who were resolved, in one shape or other, to govern the whole world. To this we may fairly add the Jewish zeal for trifles, arising from a contracted and illiberal mind. The learned subtilty of the Gentile philosophers; and the pomp and ceremonies of Paganism. As soon as christianity was established by law, debates became violent; councils after councils convened to settle the differences among christians; and sometimes they met so frequently, that they might have been called quarter sessions rather than councils. But Gregory Nazianzen, a man of learning, a Bishop and Father of the Church, has told us, in his 55th Epistle, that he chose to avoid all such assemblies: because he never saw that they had good success, but always increased rather than lessened quarrels and dissensions. But enough has been said on this part of the subject, I must therefore hasten to the main object of this lecture, the examination of the scriptural evidence for the doctrine of the Trinity.

Men might have naturally expected that if God would favor them with a revelation it should harmonize with his own attributes and with the reason and fitness of things; for none could ever have imagined that the Parent of nature would have given a system of doctrines calculated to mock the understandings of his creatures.—The presumption is therefore, that the Trinity is not a doctrine of revelation. Notwithstanding the Trinitarian fancies that he discovers this doctrine in the very first verse of the bible; and fearlessly asserts that *Elohim*, the Hebrew word translated *God*, is in the plural number, therefore there must have been more creators than one; and this plural noun being construed with the singular verb *Bara*, *created*, implies that this *plurality* consists with *Unity*! This fanciful conjecture betrays ignorance of the Hebrew language, and shows that the man, who uses it under a boyish parade of literature, discovers that as yet he has not learned his rudiments. Calvin in his commentary on Gen i. 1. speaking of those, who in support of a Trinity of persons in the Godhead, argue that Moses in his account of the Creation, joins *Elohim*, *God*, in the plural number to *Bara*, *created*, in the singular, advises very properly “*monendi sunt lectores ut sibi a violentis ejusmodi glossis caveant,*” *that readers*

should be advised to beware of such violent comments." Dr. Edwards, in his exertations on Genesis, remarks that "some may think there lurks a mystery in the word Elohim constructed with a singular verb, denoting Trinity in Unity; but what shall be said of Adonim, Baalim, and even Behemoth, which you can read with a singular adjunct, Job xiv. 10; which is perhaps used in the plural to express the vastness of that beast.

But admitting that Elohim may mean more gods than one, what can Trinitarians gain from the concession. The concession removes every argument against Polytheism and leaves the heathen in all the confidence which the inspiration of Jehovah can give, that their system of idolatry is as good as that of the Trinitarian. How came the Trinitarian to know that the word Elohim signifies three rather than any other number? A Greek could draw from this text of scripture as potent an argument for the thirty thousand gods of Hesiod as the Trinitarian for his three. St. Austin, who wrote fifteen books in defence of the Trinity, saw this argument in full force, and admits in the ninth chapter of the fifth book, that there may not only be *three persons in the Trinity*, but *any other number*!

No text of scripture ever mentions three, more than thirty, or thirty thousand, therefore all the advantage gained by admitting the word to signify more than one, is to open the floodgates of idolatry, for the deification of man and beast! Moreover how could one be infinite in power, if there were another who was his equal? Would not the existence of the second, prove the destruction of the first; or that a thing might be, and not be at the same time? The septuagint version begun 280 and completed 180 years before Christ, uniformly translates Jehovah by Kurios, Lord: and both septuagint and New Testament render Elohim, God, in the singular number.—Will Trinitarians say that the Seventy and the Apostles were ignorant of the true meaning of the terms Jehovah and Elohim? If not, then this supposed proof of the Trinity should be forever abandoned.

Luxiorf and other learned Hebrew critics inform us, that the plural is used in Hebrew to denote dignity and majesty, hence the words God, Creator, Lord, Master, Face etc. are found in the Hebrew bible in the plural number. The learned and liberal Dr. Geddes observes in his critical remarks, that the term Elohim is applied not only to the true God, but to false Gods, and even to a single idol whether male or female; such as Baal, Dagon, Ashtoreth, etc. It is applied to one angel in Judges, xiii. 22; to one man, Exod. iv. 16, and vii. 1; Nay the golden calf is so called by Aaron himself. The plural number then is no proof whatever of a Trinity of persons or Gods. This is fully admitted by the best commentators both Catholic and Protestant. See the Dissertation of Drusius on the word Elohim, in the second volume of the sacred classics.

GEN. i. 26. "*And God said, let us make man in our own image,*" has been frequently urged as proof of a Trinity. But certainly it is no more a proof of three persons than of four, ten, or any other number. The plural is used on various occasions when a plurality of persons cannot be intended. Thus Paul speaking of himself alone, says, I think to be bold against some, who think of *us*, as if *we* walked according to the flesh. ii Cor. x. 2. It is not an unusual custom for single persons, especially of high rank, to use the plural pronouns, but no instance can be given in any language, of more persons than one, using the singular pronouns. I, thou, me, him, Hence the Unitarian finds nothing in his Bible on this subject contrary to the known customs of nations and languages; but the Trinitarian finds a chaos of unintelligibility and barbarism.—Mahomet often uses the plural number in the Koran when speaking of God, and yet he professes to have been sent by God to reclaim the Christians from Trinitarian Idolatry; and boldly asserts that if Christians desist not from worshipping Jesus, they will certainly go to hell: and that if any man believe that God is the third part of three, he shall surely be damned."

Deut. vi. 4, Jehovah our Elohim is one Jehovah, has been considered by many Trinitarians as decisive in behalf of a Trinity and Unity; for why, say they, should it be said Elohim, (Gods) is one Jehovah, if Elohim be not plural and that plurality consistent with the Unity. In reply to this boasted argument, I answer, the nation of the Jews was surrounded by heathen idolaters: and this circumstance alone, even on the supposition of the word implying a plurality, fully explains *why* the Jewish legislator should proclaim, "Our Elohim is one Jehovah; because whilst the Elohim of the heathen consisted of a plurality of objects, *human and inanimate*, the Elohim of the Jews, was self-existent, independent, and *ONE* only being. The intention of Moses was to caution the Jews against the supposition that *their* God was like the gods of the heathen. That this was his design, appears evident from Deut. xi. 16. "Take heed to yourselves, that your hearts be not deceived, and ye turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, for the Lord our God is one Lord, God of Gods, and Lord of Lords." So far, therefore is this passage from asserting the plurality in Unity, that it declares directly the reverse. The great founder and teacher of Christianity, called the attention of the Jews to the important doctrine taught in this text to their Fathers, "Hear O, Israel, the Lord thy God is *ONE*: *Kurios ho Theos sou, Kurios eis estin.*" Mark xii. 29. We have then the opinion of our great Master to authorize our interpretation, because it is evident that *He* understood the term used by Moses to be singular; and consequently this mighty bulwark of orthodoxy, is levelled with the very dust. Jesus calls this, the *first* and great commandment; and the *first* of the decalogue is, "Thou shalt have no

other gods before my face." Numerous are the declarations of the Divine Being in the old Testament, asserting his UNITY. They therefore, who seek for proofs of the Trinity in the old Testament, must return from the search disappointed.

ii Chron. xxxv. 21, 22. Necho represents himself as coming up by the command of God, and it is said, "Josiah hearkened not unto the word of Necho from *Mippi Elohim*, the mouth of God." But as Necho was an idolator, and could have no communication with the God of Israel, he must have used the term, *Elohim*, to designate the gods of Egypt. The rather says Dr. Prideaux, because this is the only place in all the Bible, where the phrase "*Mippi Elohim*, the mouth of God," occurs; and the prophets all say "*Mippi Jehovah*—the mouth of the Lord has spoken." In one word, we find *Elohim* is translated *Theos* by the apostles, and never *Theoi*, meaning the true God. May we not therefore, oppose this translation under the sanction of Divine authority, to all the boasted knowledge of the most able Trinitarian critics. The apostles give us *Theos*, God, instead of *Elohim*, and tell as *Theos* is but ONE. The learned Buxtorf, in his *Lexicon*, says, *Elohim*, when used to denote the true God, has not a plural, but a singular sense, "*singularem sensum habet de unico et vero Deo usurpatum*." Bythner, in his *Lyra Prophetica*, says, "it is put in the plural after the idiom of the Hebrew tongue, to express majesty and glory." Bishop Beveridge, on the 29 articles, remarks, "the term *Elohim* and the phrases. "Let us make man," "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts," constitute a stronger argument for majesty, and super-eminent sanctity, than for a Trinity in the Divine nature.

Now is it not surprising that Moses, who knew the Lord face to face, never knew this Trinity, nor plurality? for nothing of it occurs in all his writings. Lord King in his "Critical History of the apostles' Creed," p. 55, asserts the Unity of the Godhead is every where inculcated in the Mosaic law: and the body of the Jewish people have been so immoveably fixed in the belief thereof, that during their seventeen hundred years captivity and dispersion, they have never deserted the principle, that God is ONE. This is evident from the thirteen articles of their faith, composed by Maimonides; the second of which is, THE UNITY OF THE BLESSED GOD. The repeated chorus of the first hymn of their liturgy is, "All creatures both above and below, testify and witness, all of them as one, that that the Lord is ONE, and his name ONE."

We shall now proceed to the New Testament, which being also a revelation from the unchangeable God, cannot be different from that contained in the former dispensation. But where in it can be found such language as the Father is God; the Son is God; and the Holy Ghost is God? Where is it said that the God-head consists of three

persons equal in glory, and the majesty co-eternal? No such language is to be found in the sacred scriptures.

Matthew xxviii. 19, speaks of three persons or names, but never intimates perfect equality, perfect union, nor any necessary distinction by which we might judge of the Trinity. Modalites co-essentialites, co-equalites, Eternal Generations, Processions, Incarnations, Hypostatical unions, and all such monstrous terms are fitter for conjurers than the messengers of Heaven! He that desires to find such terms must retreat from the scriptures and betake himself to some such composition as that of the Athanasian creed; that tremendous rhapsody, which constitutes the very sublimity of absurdity and impiety, in which contradictions are piled on contradictions, till the sight makes one giddy: where the infinite spirit is anatomized and laid out in distinct persons; and the whole farce crowned with the declaration, that except every one keep this faith whole and entire, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. All that Trinitarians can find in this text is simply three names: for not one word is said about Unity or equality: neither is the least intimation given of the Deity of the son or holy spirit. The whole argument therefore, that can be drawn from this text, is, that the commission is given to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit; hence the Trinitarian infers the Deity of the son and spirit from a supposition that Baptism is an act of devotion, which implies that the person, in whose name it is performed, is truly God. But if so Moses must have been God, for Paul tells Israel were all Baptized unto Moses. i Cor. x. 1. Baptism in the name of a person is only a rite implying the acknowledgement of that person, as an instructor or guide: and sometimes implies connexion with a sect or party. Accordingly Schoetgen in his Commentary on the passage, informs us that the Samaritans baptized their proselytes in the name of mount Gerisim, to distinguish their sect, who worshipped in the temple on that mount, from the Jews who worshipped at mount Zion. But who could be so wild as to infer that the Samaritans worshipped a mountain or believed in its Godhead!

The apostolical benediction, ii Cor. xiii. 14, has been alleged as proof of a Trinity. But surely all that could be implied in the passage, is a pious wish that the blessing of Almighty God might be upon them; that they might always possess that favor manifested by God through Jesus Christ, to a sinful world; and that the Divine influence which rested on the apostles and primitive Christians, might remain with them continually. The Greek word *Koinonia*, from *Koinos*, common, public, signifies a *partaking*, or *distribution*, and may well mean a participation of the Divine influence; but what sense would there be in the distribution of a person? Salvation is of God, through Christ, and effected by the Divine influence, or spirit of God, but where is the Trinity, or any necessity of its existence?

i John, v. 7, is the only passage in the sacred writings, which speaks of three persons being one ; and consequently is the only one in the bible, which a Trinitarian can produce to favor the doctrine. But unfortunately for the Trinitarian system, since the late learned Professor Porson, of Cambridge, England, favored the world with that invaluable criticism on this text, in reply to Archdeacon Travis ; the learned in general, are ashamed to appeal, any longer, to a passage so undoubtedly spurious. The Eclectic Review for March 1809, conducted by Calvinistic Trinitarians, has these remarks on the review of the controversy. "We are unspeakably ashamed that any modern divines should have fought, *pedibusque unguibus*, for the retention of a passage so indisputably spurious. They are, in our esteem, the best advocates for the Trinitarian doctrine, who join in exploding such a gross interpolation, and in protesting against its being permitted to occupy a place in the common copies of the New Testament."

The present Bishop of Lincoln, in his "*Elements of Christian Theology*," says, "I must own that after an attentive consideration of the controversy relative to this passage, I am convinced that it is spurious." Father Simon, a celebrated writer of the Catholic church, and author of the *Critical History of the New Testament*, which may be justly styled the fountain of modern criticism, having examined the 7 MSS in the French King's library, and 5 in Mr. Colbert's, and found the passage wanting in them all ; after due investigation, abandons the text as spurious. Dr. Adam Clarke, on the passage, after a learned examination of the evidence, concludes that it stands on no authority sufficient to authenticate any part of a revelation professing to have come from God. Lastly, Sir Isaac Newton, in a letter to Mr. Le Clere, entitled, "An Historical account of two notable corruptions of Scripture," published in Dr. Horsley's edition of Sir Isaac's works, has most elaborately discussed the subject, and next to Professor Porson's work, has given the most learned and luminous exposure of this base imposture.

All the Greek Fathers, omit the verse, though many of them cite the sixth and eighth to prove the Trinity, they never mention the seventh verse, which, had it existed, would have been positive proof. This appears from the works of Cyril of Alexandria, Œcumenius, Didymus, Alexandrius, who in their comments on the passage, read the spirit, water and blood, but make no mention of the three in Heaven. It is here worthy of remark, that when the Eusebians urged that the Father, Son, and Spirit, should not be considered as one, but different things ; Gregory Nazianzen, and Nicetas, answer that they might be considered as one, because John calls the Spirit, water, and blood one. Hence we reasonably infer from the objection of the Eusebians and the answer of the Catholics that the text was not in their books. Can the most ardent stickler refuse to yield

when twenty-eight of the earliest Greek authors never cite the passage. Notwithstanding, the quotations in the works of Origen alone, are so numerous, that if the New Testament were lost, it might nearly be restored from him.

The Latin fathers do not quote this verse, but on the contrary, as oft as they cite the passage, they omit the three in Heaven, as well as their unity. This is done after the days of Jerome, by Hesychius, Cassiodorus, Beda, and Pope Eusebius. The Epistle of Leo the Great, which quotes the passage, without the seventh verse, and omits also the words *in terra, in earth*, of the eighth, was applauded in the West, translated into Greek, read in the council of Chalcedon, and solemnly subscribed by all the Bishops. Thus we have the genuine reading without this spurious text quoted by the Pope, owned in the West, subscribed in the East by the fourth General Council, and therefore must have been the publicly received reading, till after the time of that Council. Nor was my text once referred to, or cited during all that long and vehement controversy about the Trinity, which agitated the Universal Church during the fourth and fifth centuries. Now had it been in their books, it would have been frequently produced, as of modern days, as a most substantial witness, yet not once does it occur in all the disputes, epistles, orations, or other writings of the Greek or Latin Fathers. St. Austin wrote fifteen books on the Trinity, but never once referred to my text. St. Ambrose in the sixth chapter of his book "*Concerning the Holy Spirit*," cites the eighth verse to prove the Unity of the three persons, but makes no mention whatever of the seventh. The same is done by Facundus, and Eucherius; therefore my text made no part of the scriptures in those days, when it was most needed, seeing twenty-one of the earliest Latin authors, have never referred, in all their writings, to i John v. 7.

The manuscripts of the New Testament in Greek, which are now extant, containing this first epistle of John, are in number one hundred and thirteen. Yet the learned professor of Divinity in Göttingen University, Dr. Michaelis, in his most invaluable "*Introduction to the New Testament*," positively asserts that not a single Greek manuscript, written before the sixteenth century, contains the controverted passage. Nor is the text to be found in any other Greek manuscript in existence, than the Codex Monfortii, in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin: and this MS is of no value, seeing it is evidently altered and interpolated in this place, and was not written till after the publication of the Complutensian Polyglot.—The Berlin MS is only a late transcript from the Cardinal's edition. From the strictest inquiry, it has been found wanting in MSS of all languages except the Latin; and by the confession of Jerome, it had no existence in the Latin before his time. Though the modern Vulgate has the text, yet it was wanted

according to the testimonies of Erasmus, Father Simon, and Dr. G. Burnet in above thirty of the most ancient MSS : and Cholins notes in the margin of his Latin editions, that it was wanted in the most ancient MSS of the Tugurine library. Most certainly a reading to be found in no MSS except the modern Latin, can pretend to but little authority : and that vanishes when we discover the marks of fraud in many of the MSS : and the fact that the seventh verse is in some of the MSS set before the eighth, and in some after, shows it to have been first added as a marginal gloss ; and afterwards inserted into the text by the ignorance or fraud of the transcribers. My text, therefore, has no claim whatever to scriptural authority, seeing it was not admitted into the Latin MSS sooner than the tenth, nor into the Greek sooner than the sixteenth century.

All the ancient versions want this passage i. e. both the Syrian versions, the Arabic, the Coptic, the Ethiopic, the Armenian, the Slavonic or Russian, and the ancient Latin. Though the modern vulgate, Armenian and Russian versions have this text, yet it was not interpolated in the Armenian before the fourteenth, nor in the Russian before the seventeenth century. With respect to the Latin copies, it is proper to remark, that some totally omit the verse, others have it in the margin ; and of those copies which have the passage inserted in the text, some have it before, and some after the Earthly witnesses. It was omitted in the first and second editions of Erasmus printed in 1516 and 1519 ; in that of Francis Asulun 1518 ; in that of Nicholas Gerbelius, printed at Haganau 1521 ; in the edition of Wolfius Cephalius, printed at Strasburg, 1524 ; in that of Simon Colinæus at Paris 1534 ; in the Latin Tugurine editions of Peter Cholins in 1543 and 1544 ; in the Saxon and German editions of Luther. In the old English bibles of Henry 8th. Edward 6th. and Queen Elizabeth, it was printed in small types, or included in brackets ; but about the year 1570, it began to be printed as it now stands in the English bibles : but by whose authority, it is unknown. However it is now excluded from the text of the justly celebrated Griesbach, and also from that of the most improved modern versions.

The history of the corruption appears to be as follows :—It is an indisputable fact that this text had its origin in the Latin version. It is another equally clear and acknowledged, that the African Fathers were the first, who discovered i John v. 7, in the Latin version. From the combination of these facts, we form this conclusion, that the mystical interpretation of i John v. 8. was written first in the margin of some Latin MSS : which mystical meaning occurred to some of the Latins, who were peculiarly desirous of proving the Trinity ; and therefore interpreted the spirit water and blood on earth, to represent the Father, Word, and Spirit in Heaven. Then Jerome for the same purpose, inserted my text in his version : and

about sixty-four years after his death, the Africans began to allege it against the vandals. Shortly after the Latins began to mark Jerome's variations in the margin of their books ; and hence the spurious testimony of the heavenly witnesses crept into the text by frequent transcriptions ; especially during the twelfth and following centuries, when disputation was revived by the schoolmen.

That Jerome interpolated this verse in the Latin vulgate, is manifest from the preface to his canonical epistles, in which he complains of being accused by some of the Latins of falsifying the scriptures. To this charge he replies, former translators have erred by omitting the testimony of the three in Heaven, so necessary for the confirmation of the catholic faith. But however orthodox Jerome might have been, he was unable to prevail on the churches of his own times to receive the testimony in heaven ; and seeing they knew his insertion, and did not admit the change, they must have condemned it as a fraud. Farther be it known, that by the unanimous testimony of the ancient interpreters, the testimony of the heavenly witnesses was wanted in those very Mss. from which Jerome pretended to have borrowed the passage !

The ancient interpreters to which I refer, are, the ancient Latin, the Syriac, and the Ethiopic. That the passage was wanted in the early Latin, is acknowledged by Jerome himself : & from the account given by Bishop Walton of the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, they were much more ancient than Jerome's ; and were used by the Oriental and Ethiopic nations from nearly the apostolic age. Seeing then, that the authors of these three most ancient and received versions have not given the testimony of the three in heaven, they are witnesses that it was wanted in the Greek Mss. of their times. I might also have cited the Armenian version, used by the Armenians ever since the age of Chrysostom : but the evidence is rendered complete by the silence of all the controversial writers in that long, vehement, and universal contest about the Trinity, both before, and after the time of Jerome.

Let us not then, on the one hand, blame poor Vigilus, Bishop of Tapsum ; for his quotation does not agree with the present text, either in words or sense ; and, besides, being a writer of very little credit, his influence was insufficient to obtain popularity, or to support a pious fraud. Nor, on the other hand, let it be pretended that the Arians razed the text out of their books. Crafty knaves they must have been, to conspire, so cunningly, all the world over, at the same time, to get all men's books into their hands, and correct them, without being perceived ! Yes, they must have been conjurers too, to do it without leaving any blot or chasm whereby their knavery might be suspected or discovered ; and to wipe away the remembrance of it out of all men's minds, so that neither Athanasius, nor themselves, when they turned to the Catholic faith, which many of

them did after the death of Constantius, could retain any recollection of such a text ever existing in any of the sacred books. Let it, therefore, be confessed, that whilst Jerome pretended to have corrected the Latin by Greek Mss. men of later times have corrected both Latin and and Greek, by the sole authority of St. Jerome.

Let us see how this spurious text was introduced into the Greek scriptures. The first time it appeared in the Grecian language, was in a translation of the acts of the council of Lateran, held by Pope Innocent the Third, A. D. 1215 ; and was afterwards inserted in the Polyglot of Cardinal Ximenes printed at Complutum in Spain, A. D. 1515, but not published till 1521. To avoid the fury of Spanish bigotry, Erasmus inserted it in his third edition, on the authority of a manuscript, said to be discovered somewhere in England ; but that Ms. could never be produced : unless we suppose it to have been the Dublin Ms. which some zealot interpolated about that time. In 1550, Robert Stephens reprinted this edition of Erasmus, with some alterations and various readings taken from the Complutensian edition, and several Greek Mss. From Stephens through Beza's edition, it passed to the Elzevirs ; and from thence through the common versions.

We have now seen the force of the evidence for the Trinity, derived from the New Testament ; and venture to assert that not a single text can be produced from the Bible or Revelation of God, to teach so absurd a dogma, that cannot be perfectly explained consistently with all the genuine laws of criticism and interpretation, on the acknowledged basis of Unitarianism. Here let it also be observed, that almost all the texts of Scriptures, which are supposed to teach, the doctrine of the Trinity or Deity of Jesus, are either spurious, interpolated, or have something suspicious about them ; and moreover, so much forgery has not been discovered in the whole Bible, as has been detected in those parts of Scripture, which appear to relate to the above doctrines.

Now let us contrast the evidence for the Unitarian doctrine, drawn from the same source. Of 1300 passages in the New Testament, where the word God occurs, not one implies a plurality of persons. There are 17 passages in which the FATHER is styled the ONLY God, 320 in which he is denominated God, absolutely by way of eminence, 150 where he is styled God with peculiar attributes ; and 90 where all prayer and praise is declared due to him alone ; and that every thing ought ultimately to be directed to his glory.

O ! ye Trinitarians, produce your strong arguments, and point us to the source from which you can draw them. Are the proofs derived from the appearances of nature ? No, the whole volume of nature cries loudly by its unity and harmony, let not the unnatural dogma be admitted. Infinite space is already filled by the person and perfections of the One Supreme God, there is no room for another.

Priestcraft Detected.

A UNIVERSALIST CATECHISING REV. C. HOPKINS.

The answers are supplied from his Sermon ; and remarks on his answers are included in brackets.

1. Ought we always to believe as the multitude, and be ashamed of a doctrine reprobated by the priests ? Ans. To set up my judgment, in opposition to the great and learned, would display a degree of vanity at which human nature ought to blush ! [Then sir, you should be a Pagan ; and had you been in the days of Christ, like Peter you would have denied him.]

2. Did you never read of any who believed the final salvation of all men ? Ans. No, except a few individuals who sprang up as of yesterday. [Then sir, you are shamefully ignorant of history, both sacred and profane : for Egyptians, Persians, Gentoos, Greeks, Romans, Celts ; all God's holy prophets since the world began ; Origin, Clement, and many of the primitive Fathers ; Bps. Tillotson, Burnet, and Newton of your own Church ; have spoken of the restitution of all things ! See Enfield's Dictionary of Philosophy, Acts iii. 21, and Burnet de stat. mort.]

3. Is God partial to the wicked in this world ? Ans. He deals ten thousand times more kindly with them, than he does with his own children. [Now, sir, if there be no peace to the wicked, and if the righteous and wicked are both recompensed in the earth, Isa. xlviii. 22, and Prov. xi. 31, is it not clear that you have most awfully mistaken ; and that you and others, who have imagined or pretended that you were righteous, and complain of so hard usage ; are the very wicked, whom the Lord is recompensing in the earth ? Indeed sir, the only scriptural opinion that can be formed of those pretended saints, that drag out a life of wretchedness here, is that they are painted hypocrites.]

4. Do Universalists believe their doctrine ? Ans. No. [Then, sir, there are no Universalists, and your conduct must appear ridiculous whilst you utter your *Philippics* against a people that, in your opinion, never existed. But seeing you are not omniscient to know their hearts, you ought to be ashamed ! blush ! sir, O blush !

5. Would you commit murder and suicide if you believed Universalism ? Ans. Yes. [Then you worship God, sir, as some of the eastern nations do the Devil, through fear of being burnt by him ; for confessedly you neither love, nor obey him from higher motives.]

NOW O, YE PRIESTS, THIS COMMANDMENT IS FOR YOU.

If I be a Father, where is mine honor, O ye Priests that despise my name ? If you will not lay it to heart to give glory to my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you. Matt. i. 6, and ii. 1, 2.

That the welfare and prosperity of a country depends very much on the moral character and condition of its inhabitants, is a universally acknowledged and sound maxim. But when religion itself is mistaken for a blind and infatuated zeal, calculated to mislead and delude the wretched victims of its fury. When this mania, like the poisonous effluvia of the pestilence that walketh in darkness, diffuses itself through all ranks and classes of community, does it not behoove every one to be on his guard, lest the passions obtain a complete ascendancy over the judgment. Had not a kind of *Jemima Wilkinson*, or *Johanna Southcot* fanaticism, seemed to pervade the minds of many, whose good sense should teach them better, we should not have troubled the public with observations of a painful, or satirical nature !

The Priests who serve at an idolatrous altar, and who have said *put me, I pray thee into the Priest's Office that I may get a piece of bread*, perceiving that a corrupt and hideous superstition will no longer pass for the religion of Jesus, and unwilling to give up the craft, have betaken themselves to fraud, deceit and Romish trick to support their sinking systems.

In the *Allegany Republican* of Feb. 20, 1824, appeared a part of the Rev. Caleb Hopkins' sermon or rather Philippic against Universalism. The paper above named is published by Samuel P. Hull, at Angelica, where Mr. Hopkins bears the character of an Episcopal clergyman. David D. How was at this time confined in the prison of Angelica for the murder of Othello Church. During August 1823, the said Mr. Hopkins held a public debate at the Great Falls of Niagara, with the Rev. L. S. Everett, Minister of the Reconciliation at Buffalo, being put to the worst, it is probable that the Rev. Mr. Hopkins has been constantly seeking revenge, since that time, for his fallen honor. The unfortunate How lay in the prison quite at hand. In the distress and melancholy of his mind, beset by a host of pretended soul-savers, who were continually crying Hell fire and fury in his ears, the man through weakness of mind, fell a plastic instrument into the hands of knavish priests. They, as I am credibly informed by an ear witness, insisted that he should throw the blame on Universalism, he at length complied ; and thus the business was brought to an issue.

Agreeably to the stipulated arrangement, How spoke of the doctrine of Universalism on the scaffold, and cautioned the people against it as one cause of his ruin. Now thought the Jewish priests, about twenty of whom attended, this is all well ; our point is gained, we shall sound loud the trumpet, and all the superstitious women and children will fear and tremble ; and so we shall be delivered from the trouble of using any arguments to defend our various systems of superstition. But hark ! hark ! How was a believer in Hell torments, and fearing God would treat him a little more severely, if

he died articulating falsehood, he declares he never honestly believed Universalism ; that he had not named it as an excuse for his crimes ; for they were committed to gratify a wicked disposition ; that he now realized the danger of resting on any system of doctrines, without experimental religion.

That How was not a Universalist, is evident from his own language. His principle distress arose from the belief that he had sent Church into another world *without time to prepare to meet his God*. He said, "the horrors of the gallows I fear not—but the thoughts of the Judgment makes my flesh tremble on my bones. If I could be raked up in embers, or suffer any thing here, it would be pleasure, if I could be happy at last." Here is evidence sufficient that How was an orthodox believer in Hell torments ! Indeed this would be naturally expected, for it is contrary to the nature of things, that a Universalist should ever become a murderer. But, that a believer in endless misery should be a murderer, is consistent with his doctrine. He that believes God to be an infinite murderer ; and that it is his duty to be like his God, must, if he yield to his religious opinions, be a murderer, whenever he obtains sufficient provocation !!

Here is an adherent of orthodoxy, expiating the folly of offering at its shrine, the rites of Moloch. What is said of David and Saul, well applies; Superstition has slain her thousands, & orthodoxy her ten thousands. Nay, by the confession of orthodoxy, the most damning sin in the world, could never have had existence, had it not been its own wicked creed. I mean despair ! Hear ye blind leaders of the blind, and let your souls loathe your own folly !

Strange though it appear, yet it is an occurrence of daily experience, that those dignified clergy, who look down on the greater part of mankind as fit fuel for the burnings, should exhibit such a contrast between their feelings and those of their Deity : for they allow that God is perfectly satisfied, that the greater part of men, should be consigned to destruction. But when any person, however vile, comes to die, even by the hands of the hangman, a motley group of these Priests assemble with their nostrums to administer to the patient ; all of which, in the true spirit of quackery, they affirm to be comple panaceas. Like true sons of the mother church, each must contribute his mite, to rescue the soul from its merited sufferings, and fit it out with a little money to pay Charon for the ferry, or bribe the door keeper of another world, to let the poor Ghost pass on !

The Orthodox Clergy are truly distressed at the progress of Universalism in this district of the country. the Rev. Dr. F. asserts Unitarians and Universalists, however honest in their sentiments, must expiate the crime of heresy in an endless Hell. The Rev Mr. P. says, they shall appear in the Judgment as abandoned blasphe-

mers. He is bold to assert that none have espoused the doctrine of Universalism, who have not either committed, or intend to commit a capital offence. The Rev. B. acknowledges the scriptures do not teach the doctrine of hell torments, but it will not do to tell the people so. The Rev. Mr. C. advises the people not to hear Universalism, for though true, it should not be encouraged; and the Rev. Mr. H. says if he were a Universalist, he would commit murder and suicide. To complete the climax, the Rev. Mr. W. affirms if there is no Hell there can be no Heaven; and the Rev. Mr. D. puts on the cap stone by asserting if Universalism be true, it is not worth the trouble to bury a man.

Readers, do such preachers give Glory to the name of God, according to the commandment, or do they not rather glorify the Devil, by ascribing to him the kingdom, power, and glory for ever and ever! Such is the state of affairs in THE GENESEE COUNTRY, notwithstanding Universalism has increased in this very district, in a quadruple ratio during the last year. That you may perceive that our clergy are true sons of the Church, compare them with those of Spain and Italy, as described in the following anecdote. "When I was in Europe, I amused myself with the conduct of the Clergy on all saints day. From three o'clock Nov. 1st. to the same hour the next day, is given by his holiness, as an holiday to the souls in Purgatory; during which time they may fly about and divert themselves in the air. Nov. 2d the Priests and friars preach the sermons for the souls, and receive as much money on that occasion, as they do at other seasons for two months. Many of them use brimstone and burn it in the pulpit, saying these flames are like those of Purgatory. They also use pictures to represent the Ghosts in purgatory, holding up their hands and crying for assistance.—They prove their sermons by peculiar revelations and apparitions, for they cannot find a single passage of scripture on which to ground their assertions. Such sermons are to the sensible part of the people, better diversion than a Comedy.

P. S. The scriptures say, believe in the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved: but of late times are greatly changed, and now Orthodoxy declares that, whoever would be saved, it is necessary above all things, that he believe in Hell and the Devil!!

DIED—Very suddenly at Rochester, on the 14th ult. Mr. Lewis W. Covell, an ardent opposer of Universalism during the last six months. The first number of a periodical work, edited by him with the boasted design of suppressing the Magazine, was nearly ready for publication, when his death arrested its progress. If it had so fared with the Editor of the Magazine, many in this vicinity would have attributed the occurrence to the vindictive interposition of heaven! But the writer makes no such use, or rather abuse, of this melancholy event.

*. The communications from West Bloomfield and Palmyra, will appear in our next.